



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

December 28, 2011

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To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
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From: William T Fujioka *William T. Fujioka for*  
Chief Executive Officer

## **STATUS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF MOVING THE TOXICOLOGY LAB FROM THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/DEPARTMENT OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

On December 6, 2011, your Board directed my office to report back within a month on the feasibility of moving the Toxicology Lab from the Agricultural Commissioner/Department of Weights and Measures (ACWM) to the Department of Public Health (DPH).

In response to your Board's directive, on December 20, 2011, a workgroup comprised of staff from ACWM, DPH, and my office met to review and discuss topics that will formulate the basis for the County's recommendation on the feasibility of transferring ACWM's Environmental Toxicology Laboratory (Toxicology Lab) to DPH. The topics discussed included:

- the history and origin of the Toxicology Lab;
- the mission, duties, and responsibilities (services provided/laboratory tests performed) of the Toxicology Lab and DPH's Public Health Laboratory (Public Health Lab);
- the mandates and certification requirements that the Toxicology Lab must adhere to and/or maintain;
- an understanding of how the County's placement of the Toxicology Lab in ACWM compares to the placement of toxicology labs throughout the State of California;
- background on the organizational structure and budgetary composition of the Toxicology Lab; and
- the operational issues and financial constraints affecting both the Toxicology Lab and the Public Health Lab.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*

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Based on the December 20, 2011 discussion, the departments determined there were critical matters still to be discussed and/or assessed that could have a significant impact on the final recommendation, including laboratory requirements, space needs and necessary one-time/ongoing laboratory costs. Having a greater understanding of the Toxicology Lab's workload, certification requirements, operational constraints, and financial performance will be critical to determine the impact that the transfer could have on the operational and financial challenges that the Public Health Lab has encountered over the last several years related to State and federal funding reductions and a decreased workload from the Department of Health Services.

In addition to assessing the feasibility of the transfer, the County workgroup also discussed the potential value of formulating possible alternatives to the transfer of the Toxicology Lab from ACWM to DPH. On December 22, 2011, representatives of the Public Health Lab met with staff from ACWM's Toxicology Lab and completed a site visit of the Toxicology Lab to observe and obtain a first-hand understanding of the Toxicology Lab's operation, laboratory equipment, and space needs. Given the action items to be completed and their impact on the recommendations to be presented to your Board, we are requesting additional time. DPH and ACWM will complete their assessment, formulate their recommendation(s), and report back to your Board no later than February 15, 2012.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, you may contact Dr. Robert Kim-Farley, Director of DPH's Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, at (213) 989-7161 or [rkimfarley@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:rkimfarley@ph.lacounty.gov), or Kurt E. Floren, Agricultural Commissioner/Department of Weights and Measures Director, at (626) 575-5451 or [kfloren@acwm.lacounty.gov](mailto:kfloren@acwm.lacounty.gov).

WTF:SAS:MLM  
RFM:hd

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Agricultural Commissioner/Department of Weights and Measures  
Public Health